
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Executive Order No. 29 (2010)

Serving Virginia's Veterans

Importance of Veterans Services

Over 820,000 military veterans and their families call Virginia home. The Commonwealth has a special responsibility to support these men and women, as well as the 245,000 active duty service members, reservists, and National Guard members from Virginia. These brave men and women leave safe homes and pleasant lives to defend and advance this nation and the Commonwealth. They have courageously combated tyranny and oppression to bring freedom to others. Our nation and our Commonwealth owe these men and women a tremendous debt of gratitude.

In 1789, George Washington said *"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."* These sentiments apply as strongly today as they did at the founding of our nation. There is no greater obligation of a nation than to support the military, veterans, and their families and to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Directives for Serving Virginia's Veterans

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor by Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, Section 2.2-103 of the *Code of Virginia*, and in conjunction with Executive Order Number 10, Housing Policy Framework of the Commonwealth of Virginia, in regard to addressing homelessness to include veterans, I hereby set forth the policy of the Executive Branch for improving services to Virginia's veterans, *with the goal of making Virginia our nation's most veteran-friendly state.*

- I hereby direct all state agencies to identify new, expanded, or customized services that meet the educational, health care, and social services needs of Virginia's veterans. Agencies will work with the Department of Veterans Services to identify the resources required to implement the new, expanded, or customized services and will report such requirements to the Commissioner of Veterans Services no later than April 30, 2011, and on April 30 of each

subsequent year this Executive Order is effective.

- I hereby direct the Board of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations to develop legislation to be considered by the Governor for introduction in the 2012 and subsequent General Assemblies. Such proposals shall be submitted, via the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services, to the Governor's Office no later than August 15, 2011, and by August 15 of each subsequent year this Executive Order is effective.
- I hereby direct the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services and the Veterans Services Foundation to continue to give high priority to obtaining federal grants, private contributions, alternate dedicated revenue sources, and other resources for improving services to veterans in Virginia.
- I hereby direct the Department of Veterans Services to continue the development of the Automated Claims Processing System.
- I hereby direct the Department of Human Resource Management to ensure that all state agencies are aware of, and comply with, the Veterans Hiring Preference in State Government. I also hereby direct all state agency heads to renew their commitment to veterans' preference in hiring.
- I hereby request that the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, in his capacity as Virginia's Chief Jobs Creation Officer, along with a representative of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, to partner with the Department of Veterans Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Virginia Community College System to conduct research to identify the demographics and other characteristics of veterans at risk for unemployment, to review veterans employment trends for the Commonwealth, and to determine whether veterans are being sufficiently employed in growth sectors and jobs in high demand.
- I hereby direct the Department of Veterans Services, Department of Human Resource Management, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Virginia Community College System to identify the resources necessary to create, under the Department of Veterans Services, a program to develop employment opportunities for veterans. The program shall include a focus on developing entrepreneurial opportunities for veterans, particularly those with disabilities.
- I hereby direct the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Services, to work with local agencies to identify transportation services for veterans that could supplement the transportation routes and schedules already provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American Veterans. Any new transportation programs created should endeavor to employ veterans for these services.
- I hereby direct all state agencies to work with the Department of Veterans Services and the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program to ensure continued commitment to serving the needs of veterans and their families affected by combat stress and traumatic brain injuries.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be in effect upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until June 30, 2014, unless amended or rescinded by further Executive Order.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 23rd day of December, 2010.

/s/ Robert F. McDonnell, Governor

Attest:

/s/ Secretary of the Commonwealth